

Press Release

July 2011

Asia Triennial Manchester 11 expands programme with more artists and commissions for 2011

The UK's only Asian art triennial opens 1 October – 27 November 2011 in Manchester, with a vibrant and exciting showcase of current contemporary visual art from Asia.

Asia Triennial Manchester 11 (ATM11), initiated and led by Shisha, is a festival of visual culture that features a series of exhibitions, commissions and interventions by international and UK artists exploring the theme of *Time and Generation*, presenting new site-specific work alongside work not seen before in the UK, and challenging stereotypical viewpoints of contemporary Asian artistic practice.

The artistic vision for ATM11 looks at one of the most important stories of our time: the migration of peoples from one place to other parts of the world. This continuous movement of people has radically changed our demographics, giving rise to new politics of identity focused on place, territory, belonging, global economic changes and community.

Exciting new commissions confirmed include:

The International 3 is working with performance artist **Enkhbold Togmidshirev** from Mongolia. Raised in a nomadic family that has been breeding horses for generations, he now teaches at Ulaanbaatar's Institute of Fine Arts. For his performances, Enkhbold uses his own scaled down, self-built version of a ger, the traditional Mongolian mobile circular living structure. Hosted initially by Manchester Museum and then by Islington Mill, he will move his ger from site to site using performance to reveal and reflect on his heritage, its culture and traditions in relation to the contexts in which he finds himself.

ATM11 has commissioned a new work by **Adeela Suleman** to be shown in **Manchester Cathedral**. Karachi-based Suleman often dwells on the reality of the death and destruction around her yet this work is in no sense documentary - it does not seek to explain the contemporary political situation in Pakistan. Instead its tone is primarily poetic and reflective. There is no moral lesson to be taken away from these works; instead there are a series of symbols that hover between the mystical, the everyday and the autobiographical, each seemingly linked in a free-wheeling narrative that links life, death and a paradise that is not all that was promised to be.

Artists **Tasawar Bashir** and **Brian Duffy** present *Silsila*, a Sufi-inspired cosmic journey in sound in the new £3 million Discovery Centre at **Jodrell Bank, home of the giant Lovell telescope**. This new installation commissioned by Shisha will further develop ideas from Brian Duffy's earlier project *The Optophonics Lunaphone*, a device that changed starlight into music. An endless musical algorithm will translate data sourced from stellar events such as, cosmic background noise, star formation, pulsars, solar plasma, and light from galaxy clusters, and

combine it with the voice of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, arguably the greatest qawwali singer of the modern era.

5 Places, a partnership between **Bury Art Gallery** and Metasenta in Melbourne, creates a sequence of shows in five locations around the world linked to ideas of artistic mobility and new ways of engaging with place and identity in a globalised culture. For ATM11, Bury's *5 Places* is guest curated by Irene Barberis of Metasenta and features two Chinese artists **Shen Shaomin** and **Tam Wai Ping**.

Manchester Craft and Design Centre showcases a series of cultural exchanges by pairs of makers from India and the North West of England in *Made For Manchester*. It also links with *Extending the Line* at the **Holden Gallery at Manchester Metropolitan University** where the work of **Manisha Parekh** and **Pushpa Kumari** encapsulates the tensions and powerful productivity of Indian contemporary art in the 21st century.

People's History Museum hosts *Memories*, an exhibition exploring generations and journeys in relation to migrant communities settled in Cheetham Hill, North Manchester. Paintings by **J Chuhan** respond to people and the sense of an interior life rich in experiences within the everyday environment of shifting cultural heritage. The paintings are complemented by screenings of *Presence*, a short film by **Richard Creed** revealing memory as a contemplative act distilling notions of identity. Screenings of the ATM11 trail programme's *South Asian Whispers* film, curated by Lwimbo Kunda retell stories of migration in the area's South Asian communities.

As part of the ATM11 Fringe, **Daksha Patel**, a Manchester-based artist, has developed a new commission for **Piccadilly train station** and **Cornerhouse**, working with Manchester Metropolitan University and The Hamilton Project. By mapping recorded urban activity onto biological structures (combining GIS technology & datasets with internal body imaging) she shows the connections between ourselves and our environment, resulting in a series of striking drawings, which are both beautiful and intriguing.

Manchester Art Gallery and **Chinese Arts Centre** will present the culmination of a year-long collaborative project involving artists from Hong Kong and the UK working with the Neesa South Asian Well Women's Group using a 'pass it on' approach to sharing creative skills and ideas. Manchester Art Gallery will feature a new film produced with artist **Cheni Hung**, which relates the women's stories of moving to and living in Cheetham Hill North Manchester using puppets and sets made by the group. Chinese Arts Centre will display the puppets alongside an installation of new soft sculptures made with and by **Eastman Cheng** from Hong Kong.

Previously confirmed major elements of the programme:

Lahore-based artist **Rashid Rana** was previously commissioned in 2007 for a trailblazer at the first Asia Triennial Manchester. Widely recognised as one of the most important artists of his generation from South Asia, Rana works across multiple media including photography, sculpture and video installation. This exhibition at **Cornerhouse** is Rana's first major public solo show in the UK and includes new work.

Cornerhouse is also curating the **Asia Triennial Film Programme** that includes a range of new films from across the region with a major focus on Philippine director **Brillante Mendoza**, recently named best Director at the 62nd Cannes Film Festival.

Indian artist **N S Harsha** has produced Thought Mala or "spiritual garlands" to be worn by visitors in the Victorian Gothic splendour of **The John Rylands Library**. The artist intends them to transform the library into a spiritual place full of ritual, as visitors borrow the garlands

as they would a book, wearing them, handling them or simply contemplating them. ATM11 has also commissioned **Devika Rao**, a prominent British-based Indian classical dancer to devise a specific dance piece responding to N S Harsha's garlands at the launch.

Examining the growth of the VISA industry in Istanbul, artists collective **PiST** transform **Castlefield Gallery** into an alternative VISA application and training centre for visitors to ATM11, replacing the obligatory language and cultural exams for emigration to the UK.

Institution for the future at **Chinese Arts Centre** showcases a group of young artists from China and other Asian countries, who actively engage with the local art scene and attempt to contribute to the development of an arts infrastructure in their country.

MadLab's exhibition *Korea, Time and Generation: 38 ° of Separation* presents cultural reflections and experiences of DPRK through the eyes of North Korean, South Korean and Western artists, illustrators and photographers, presenting the practical and cultural aftermath of a divided nation, whose populations, separated since WWII, have spent their daily lives in very different ways.

Dark Matters at **The Whitworth Art Gallery** is an exhibition of British and international artists centred on the theme of shadow, technology and art. These contemporary works present the visual 'tool' of shadow; an ancient strategy to inspire wonder, craft illusion and create narrative, but all the works have a significant level of digital and technological intervention. For ATM11 the exhibition includes a new commission by Korean video artist **Ja-Young Ku** whose work fuses live performance with projected overlays of recordings in the same space.

For further information please contact Catharine Braithwaite on 07947 644 110 or cat@we-r-lethal.com

Notes to Editors:

Asia Triennial Manchester (ATM) is conceived by Shisha, the UK's international agency for contemporary South Asian crafts and visual arts, in partnership with Bury Art Gallery, Castlefield Gallery, Chinese Arts Centre, Cornerhouse, Cube, The International 3, Jodrell Bank, John Rylands Library, MadLab, Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester Cathedral, Manchester Craft & Design Centre, Manchester Museum, Manchester Metropolitan University, People's History Museum and The Whitworth Art Gallery.

For the past 10 years, **Shisha** has championed new and dynamic visual cultures from South Asia and beyond to the UK, including new commissions by Subodh Gupta, Rashid Rana, Anoli Perera, Shilpa Gupta, Atul Dodiya, Imran Qureshi and Pushpamala N. For ATM11, Shisha continues to develop this, placing newly commissioned work and forging a dialogue not only with the selected artists, but also with the international arts community.

Shisha is the UK's international agency for South Asian contemporary crafts and visual arts. Shisha Ltd is an independent registered charitable organisation (charity number 1088702), established in 2001 and based in Manchester. Shisha is at the vanguard of creative practice, programming landmark projects, which have pushed boundaries, opened up critical dialogue and challenged perceptions in current artistic, cultural and socio-political discourses. Shisha supports artists and curators of South Asian origin through partnerships, project management, professional development and advocacy. Visit www.shisha.net

www.asiatriennialmanchester.com



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